

The Christmas Story in Art and Song



IN BETHLEHEM

BY BOUGUREAU

Oh come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
Oh come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem,
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord,
God of God, Light of Light,
Who didst not shrink from the Virgin's womb;
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above,
Glory to God in the highest,
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jem, to Thee be glory given,
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Oh come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.



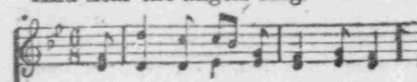
CHRISTMAS ANGELS AND BELLS

BY BLASHFIELD

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King;
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lonely plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

O ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow!
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing.



ter of parents and ancestors. He was the son of a clergyman, a man of high literary ability, and a poet of worth. His eldest brother was a poet, and there had been writers in the Wesley family for several generations.

He inherited his rugged character from both his mother and father, and from the former he received the training which enabled him to clothe facts in poetic imagination without losing the truth of his subject.

His hymns were often suggested by incidents in his personal history. "See How Great a Flame Aspires" was written after preaching to the Newcastle colliers, and the imagery of the first verse was suggested by the furnace blasts and burning pit heaps which were scattered over the district for some miles around Newcastle-on-Tyne, and which illuminated the whole neighborhood.

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old.

This hymn, which has been made the subject of Blashfield's beautiful canvas, "Christmas Angels and Bells," is the inspired song of Edmund Hamilton Sears, an American hymn writer of 1854-1876. Oliver Wendell Holmes considered Sears one of the sweetest singers of sacred songs known to hymnology.

Dr. Sears was the son of Joseph Sears, of Sandisfield, Berkshire County, Mass., being born in that town April 6, 1810. He studied for the ministry at the theological school, Cambridge, Mass., 1834-1837.

In 1838, he became master of the First Congregational Church (Unitarian), of Wayland, Mass., in 1854 he became known as an author, and in 1859 was appointed associate editor of a religious magazine published in Boston. He

held this position for twelve years, and contributed largely to the magazine.

His hymn, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," was inspired in 1859 by hearing, one Christmas Eve, some Christmas music played upon chimes, which, he says, "rang out true and sweet on the crisp air and inspired me to worshipful verse."

The tune to which the hymn is generally sung was written by F. Westlake in 1870, although the old tune by R. Storrs Willis, composed in 1860, is frequently used. The origin of that peculiar but beautiful hymn, "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful," is lost in antiquity. It is, perhaps, from the pen of some German hymn writer of the seventeenth century, but the most generally used translation is the one by William Mercer.

There is also another translation, by F. Oakley, which is well known, the music for both translations being by J. Reading, who composed the tune in 1880.

Rev. William Mercer was an Englishman through and through. His hymnal, issued in 1860, containing the Canticles, the Psalms, and 511 hymns with tunes, found its way into 1,000 churches during its first year, and there was a sale of 100,000 copies in 1861 and 1862.

A poet himself of no mean ability, he had a sympathetic appreciation of the works of early writers of poetry. Among his best works were his translations of early German hymns.

"Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful" is one of the best known and most widely sung at Christmas time. Bouguereau's famous canvas "In Bethlehem" beautifully illustrates this hymn.

In 1865 H. S. Irons visited Trinity College, England, about one week preceding Christmas and found some of the students trying a Christmas carol written by Bishop

SING, oh, sing, this blessed morn:
Unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given,
God Himself comes down from heaven:
Sing, oh, sing, this blessed morn:
Jesus Christ to-day is born.
God of God, and Light of Light,
Comes with mercies infinite,
Joining in a wondrous plan
Heaven to earth, and God to man:
Sing, oh, sing, etc.

God comes down that man may rise,
Lifted by Him to the skies;
Christ is Son of Man that we
Sons of God in Him may be.
Sing, oh, sing, etc.
Oh, renew us, Lord, we pray,
With Thy Spirit day by day,
That we ever one may be
With the Father and with Thee.
Sing, oh, sing, etc.



MARY AND THE INFANT JESUS

BY BODENHAUSEN

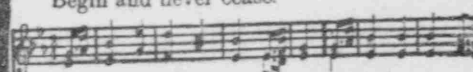
While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.
Fear not, said he, for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind:
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

"To you, in David's town, this day
Is born of David's line,
The Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:

"The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapt in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song.

"All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace:
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease."



Christopher Wordsworth. The lines were beautiful, but the tune to which they were set displeased the composer. He offered to set the hymn to music, and, retiring to the library, he immediately wrote the score for

Sing, oh, sing, this blessed morn,
Unto us a child is born.

Mr. Irons' tune was used until 1894, when J. Barnaby altered it somewhat, with Mr. Irons' permission. The hymn has inspired a number of artists to their best efforts, and many beautiful pictures have been produced in illustrating the theme. One of the most notable of these is "The Babe in the Manger," by H. Havenith.

Bishop Wordsworth's works bear the stamp of the scholar. He was of a literary family, and highly favored in his early surroundings. His father was master of Trinity College from 1826 to 1841, and was an author of note. William Wordsworth, the poet laureate, was his uncle, being his father's eldest brother. His grandfather, John Wordsworth, was a prominent lawyer, and his eldest brother, Charles, was Bishop of St. Andrews, Dunkeld, and Dunblane.

The hymn writer completed a brilliant university career and won many medals. He was chosen a fellow of his college. He wrote a number of well-known historical and religious works and was a popular lecturer, being a great traveler and a fluent and graphic talker.

La Rolle's famous painting, "The Nativity," is in illustration of Nahum Tate's familiar hymn, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night." Tate wrote the verses twelve years before his death in 1706.

Mr. Tate was born in 1662 and was poet laureate to King Charles II and King James II. He is best known for the "New Version of the Psalms of David, Fitted to the Tunes Used in Churches," which was compiled "in collaboration with N. Brady, D. D., chaplain in ordinary." This sanctioned new version soon supplanted the old version, and is still regarded as the authorized Psalmody of the Church of England service, having been printed for nearly two centuries with the Book of Common Prayer. Several volumes of poems, secular and religious, have come from the pen of this early hymn writer.

William Chatterton Dix, who wrote in 1859 the famous



THE BABE IN THE MANGER

BY HAVENITH

HARK! the herald angels sing:
Glory to the new-born King;
Hail the Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as Man with man to dwell—
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.

Risen with healing in His wings,
Light and life to all He brings,
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!



NATIVITY BY LA ROLLE

hymn, "As With Gladness Men of Old," for which music written by Conrad Kocher in 1838 is generally used, and which Pigheim's "Star of Bethlehem" so beautifully illustrates, was among the first hymn writers to produce the medieval style of hymnology demanded by the Church of England about 1850.

Mr. Dix, born June 14, 1837, was the son of John R. Dix of Bristol, England, who was a surgeon and a man of letters. William C. Dix was a practical man of business as well as a poet. While composing one of his sweetest hymns, "The Manger-Throne," he was in Glasgow, Scotland, working in a marine insurance office.

The guiding star seems to be the theme of both of his well-known Christmas hymns. One begins:

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,

while the first two lines of "The Manger-Throne" are:

Like silver lamps in a distant shrine,
The stars are sparkling clear and bright.

Mr. Dix contributed important hymns to several generally used collections. He wrote about twenty-five in all including several translations from the Greek.

King Edward's Christmas Giving.

YOU have often wondered, perhaps, how a king remembers his relatives and friends at Christmas, for a mighty ruler has his circle of personal and intimate friends just as any one else has. Naturally, however, gifts made by royalty are more expensive as a rule than those exchanged in humbler circles. It is said that King Edward and Queen Alexandra, of England, spend between \$20,000 and \$25,000 each year upon their Christmas purchases.

In order to remember their personal friends with a suitable souvenir of the season, each requires between eighty and one hundred gifts. As these usually take the form of jewelry the cost is heavy.

It is nothing unusual several days or a week before Christmas to see the King and Queen paying quiet visits to the stores in Bond and Regent streets, London. They like to mingle with the holiday shoppers and to select their presents just as other persons do.

When time and pressing engagements do not permit this, the West End shopkeepers send samples of their goods to the royal palace, and from these the King and Queen make their selections.

In choosing Christmas gifts, their justices are always careful to make each one appropriate to its intended recipient. Jewelry is the King's most frequent choice, but he also gives away snuff-boxes, smokers' requisites, and walking-sticks.

With each gift it is the King's usual custom to send a little note of greeting instead of a private Christmas card, and, needless to say, the former is more valued by the recipient than the latter would be.

This practice is also followed by Queen Alexandra. In addition to jeweled trinkets, however, a common gift from the Queen to personal friends is a photograph of some favorite scene or pet, taken by the Queen herself, daintily mounted and framed, with the royal monogram "A." surmounted by a crown, on the frame.

Not only do the royal pair send tokens of remembrance to relatives and favorite friends at home and abroad, but they present a Yuletide gift to every member of their household, which is an extensive one.

Of course the gifts made to dependents are not as costly nor as handsome as those purchased for relatives and friends, but they are carefully chosen.

Queen Alexandra often follows the custom of Queen Victoria, whose habit it was to present dress goods, shawls, &c., to female members of the royal household. King Edward, too, sometimes includes pairs of good slippers among his Christmas gifts for male servants, but cigarette and cigar cases and pipes are his usual presents to these people.

And in addition to the members of the royal household, each employe on the Sandringham estate also receives a Christmas gift from the King. This consists of a large joint of beef cut from one of his majesty's own cattle. Tables heavily laden with the meat are placed in the stables on Christmas eve, and after the meat has been personally inspected by the King, large joints are handed to each man in the several departments, from the highest to the lowest in rotation. Only the prime joints are given to the employes, the other parts—good meat for all that—being distributed among the cottagers on the estate who are not employed by his majesty or who are past work.

Then gifts of game are also made to a large number of persons who in any way may have rendered some service to his majesty. Railway employes, post-office officials, police, and tradesmen are often favored by the receipt of pheasants, partridges, hares, or rabbits, bearing a big label, "From His Majesty, the King," printed in bold, red letters.



I look across the chimney-tops—
The city's turmoil lies below;
Upon how many hearts to-night
The cheery fire is all aglow,
And thoughts that come at Christmas-tide
Float in, with me to abide,
So near the chimney-tops!

And quick as fades the sunset-sheen
The light leaps out to meet the stars,
As if, perchance, their slender bars
Might bridge the space between!
For me, I need no candle's ray
To point a way
Across the chimney-tops.

I know the myriad signs of life—
The shops' display, the hovels, homes,
The struggles and the wearying strife;
There's food enough for thought, where I
Look out so near the sky,
Across the chimney-tops.

The world seems far, the silence drear,
This holy night, when friends draw near,
When hands are clasped and homes most dear—
I know it all; it once was mine;
My thoughts go far, as to a shrine,
Across the chimney-tops.

And here and there, like mindful saints,
The steadfast church spires point above;
I cannot hear, though loud the bells
Chime out their tale of peace and love;
Still far away sad memories fly
To churchyard fields that lie
Beyond the chimney-tops.

The city gleams fade one by one,
Though Christmas cheer be all below;
Some thankfulness is due, I know,
Since through my window smiles the sun.
What though its joys I must forego,
Sweet peace that comes at Christmas-tide
Beneath the chimney-tops.

—FRANK H. SWEET.

Charles Wesley has long been called the "Father of Sacred Song," and his verses form an important part of every hymn book.

It was the completeness and beauty of the Christmas symbol in "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," written away back in 1839, and set to music by F. B. Mendelssohn, that inspired two notable canvases—"Mary and the Infant Jesus," from the brush of Von Bodenhausen, and "Wise Men Journeying to Jerusalem," by Tissot.

This hymn has been translated into many tongues, and is used at Christmas by missionaries in many lands; its words ring out in frozen Greenland, as well as upon the burning plains of Africa, or the sun-kissed islands of the sea.

Charles Wesley was particularly fortunate in the mat-

